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# Message Text

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AID-05 INSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

SAM-01 OMB-01 EUR-12 /092 W
---------- 072196
R 100814Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3980
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 23570

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CASC, VS, CB, TH, LA
SUBJ: REMAINING INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN THAILAND

1. FOLLOWING ARE THE PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOM-
MENDATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS COORDINATOR WILSON AFTER
CONSULTATIONS HERE ON REMAINING INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROBLEMS
WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND MEMBERS OF THE MISSION STAFF, MEETINGS
WITH THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, AND VISISTS
TO LAO, MEO, THAI DAM AND KHMER REFUGEE CAMPS IN NONG KHAI,
NAM PHONG (KHON KAEN), UDORN AND ARNAYAPRATHET OVER THE PAST
FOUR DAYS. A FURTHER REPORT WILL BE MADE ON WILSON'S RETURN TO
WASHINGTON.

2.WIND-UP OF FIRST PHASE OF THE INDO CHINA PROGRAM

A. DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH MISSION STAFF REGARDING NUMBERS
OF REFUGEES REMAINING AFTER OCTOBER 31 CUT-OFF OF NEW ADMIS-
SIONS TO U.S. CAMPS INDICATE THAT SLIGHTLY OVER 1000 VIETNAMESE
AND KHMER REFUGEES ARE STILL IN THAILAND WHO FALL WITHIN
PREVIOUSLY APPROVED CRITERIA AND TOWARDS WHOM THE U.S. HAS
A CONTINUING SPECIAL OBLIGATION.
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THESE ARE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

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--APPROXIMATELY 700 CATEGORY I AND II VIETNAMESE (INCLUDING
ABOUT 30 THAI DAM)
-- APPROXIMATELY 310 CATEGORY I AND II KHMER

B. A FEW OF THESE ARE ALSO PRIME CANDIDATES FOR RESETTLE-
MENT IN THIRD COUNTRIES SUCH AS FRANCE, GERMANY, CANADA,
AUSTRALIA ND THE UK, BUT THEIR
PERSONAL PREFERENCE IS FOR
MOVEMENT TO THE U.S. WHERE THEY HAVE SPECIAL TIES. THESE
PEOPLE WERE NOT OVERLOOKED IN THE EARLIER COUNTS, BUT HAVE
SIMPLY TURNED UP AS LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO
SORT THROUGH THE REMAINING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES FOUND TO BE
SCATTERED IN VARIOUS PLACES HERE IN THAILAND.

C. RECOMMENDATION: ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE HAVE NOT
THUS FAR EXCEEDED THE IATF/INS AGREED FIGURE OF 133,400 INDO-
CHINESE REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, WILSON
STRONGLY RECOMMENDS ACCEPTANCE (BUT NOT REPEAT NOT PROCESSING
THROUGH CAMPS) OF UP TO 1000 OF THIS NUMBER AS THE FINAL GROUP
TO BE ADMITTED TO THE U.S. UNDER PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PAROLE
AUTHORITIES. THE TOTAL IN THE U.S. UNDER CURRENT PAROLE
AUTHORITY WOULD THUS REMAIN "IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 130,000",
AS PROMISED THE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS, AND UNDER 135,000.
ONE THOUSAND IS TOO MANY TO HANDLE TN A CASE-BY-CASE
BASIS. THE ADMISSION OF THIS LAST REMAINING SEGMENT OF
HIGH PRIORITY REFUGEES UNDER GROUP PAROLE AUTHORITY IS
CERTAINLY REASONABLE, IN KEEPING WITH OUR SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS
AND CONSISTENT WITH THE LINE WE HAVE TAKEN WITH CONGRESS.

3. CONDITIONS IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS.

A. THE U.S. MISSION HERE, ON THE BASIS OF RTG AND INDE-
PENDENT REPORTS, ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE NOW OVER 70,00
REFUGEES IN CAMPS IN THAILAND AND PERHAPS 10,000 MORE OUT-
SIDE OF CAMPS. THOSE IN CAMPS INCLUDE ROUGHLY 48,000 LAO AND
MEO, 20,000 KHMER, 1000 VIETNAMESE AND 2000 THAI DAM. THIS
CONSTITUTES AN ENORMOUS PROBLEM FOR THE RTG IN BOTH FINANCIAL
AND POLITICAL TERMS. THE NUMBERS ARE INCREASING BY WELL OVER
150 PER WEEK AS NEW ARRIVALS CROSS THE FRONTIERS. IN THE
EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT, THE RTG WILL NOT FORCIBLY SEND THEM BACK
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TO THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, DESPITE OCCASIONAL PUBLIC THREATS TO
DO SO.

B. THE FIRST PROBLEM IS TO SEE THAT THESE REFUGEES ARE
ADEQUATELY CARED FOR. THE SECOND, LONGER RANGE PROBLEM IS HOW
BEST TO RESETTLE THEM, EITHER IN THAILAND OR IN THIRD COUNTRIES,
ALTHOUGH THE BULK MUST CLEARLY REMAIN HERE IN THAILAND.
SOME SORT OF NEW LABEL MUST BE INVENTED TO DESCRIBE THE PROCESS,

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AT LEAST IN ITS EARLY STAGES, IN VIEW OF THAI POLITICAL SENSI-
BILITIES TO ANYTHING CONNOTING PERMANENT "RESETTLEMENT".

C. CONDITIONS IN THE CAMPS JUST VISITED BY WILSON, DCM
MASTERS AND MISSION STAFF OFFICERS VARY FROM ADEQUATE TO
APPALLING. THE BEST WAS NAM PHONG. THE WORST WAS THE
MEO CAMP AT NONG KHAI. AT THE LATTER WELL OVER 8,000 REF-
UGEES ARE CRAMMED TOGETHER UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH MAY SEEN GOOD
(AS THE UNHCR ARGUED IN WASHINGTON) IN COMPARISON WITH BANG-
LADESH REFUGEE CAMPS, BUT ARE CLEARLY INEXCUSABLE BY ANY
OTHER STANDARD. THREE MEO DIED IN LAST FEW DAYS AT NONG KHAI,
THOUGH THE HEALTH OF MOST OTHER REFUGEES THERE IS REPORTED
TO BE REMARKABLY GOOD DESPITE GENERALLY INADEQUATE MEDICAL
FACILITIES. NO SCHOOLING IS AVAILABLE FOR THE CHILDREN (WHO
WERE RECEIVING SOME EDUCATION IN LAOS). THERE IS NO SPACE AT
NONG KHAI FOR RAISING VEGETABLES, WHICH REMAIN IN SHORT SUPPLY,
BUT RICE IS NOW ADEQUATE. NO MEO ARE ALLOWED OUT OF THE CAMPS
OFFICIALLY TO WORK, ALTHOUGH SOME UNDOUBTEDLY SNEAK OUT;
BUT THERE IS NO PLACE FOR THEM TO GO.

D. THE OVER 3,000 LAO IN A SEPARATE AREA OF THE SAME CAMP
ARE RELATIVELY BETTER OFF, ARE PERMITTED GREATER FREEDOM OF
MOVEMENT AND MAY OPERATE OUTSIDE THE CAMP WHERE THEY HAVE RELA-
TIVES OR FRIENDS. THEY MAY ALSO WORK FOR OTHERS, BUT MAY NOT
BE GIVEN LAND OF THEIR OWN.

E. THE 2,200 THAI DAM ARE BETTER OFF STILL, BUT LIVING
CONDITIONS REMAIN PRIMITIVE. THEY ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO BE
ABSORBED QUIETLY INTO THAI SOCIETY, IF THIRD COUNTRIES DO
NOT TAKE THEM. THE 12,000 MEO AT NAM PHONG ARE WELL
ORGANIZED, LIVING IN CLOSE, BUT NOT OVER-CROWDED QUARTERS,
PERMITTED TO GROW THEIR OWN VEGETABLES, AND THE CHILDREN ARE
IN THEIR OWN SCHOOLS ORGANIZED ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.
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F. ARANYAPRATHET, WITH 2,400 KHMER, IS NOW DRY AND
SOMEWHAT IMPROVED, THOUGH THE PEOPLE ARE NO LONGER PERMITTED
OUTSIDE TO FARM, AND CONDITIONS ARE FAR FROM GOOD.

G. DESPITE CONTINUED PROBLEMS IN MOST OF THE CAMPS
VISITED (AND CERTAINLY IN NAN WHICH THERE WAS NO TIME TO
VISIT), THE SITUATION IS NVERTHELESS IMPROVING IN MANY WAYS.
THE THAI INTERIOR MINISTRY HAS BEEN GIVEN NEW RESPONSIBILITY
AND AUTHORITY AND HAS ASSIGNED SOME TOP FLIGHT PETPLE TO THE JOB.
THE PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES ARE SHOWING NEW INTEREST AND RESPON-
SIBILITY. THE GOVERNOR OF NONG KHAI, WITH WHOM WE TALKED, IS
CLEARLY ON TOP OF HIS JOB. HE HAS PLANS FOR AN EXPANDED AND
CONSOLIDATED CAMP TO HOUSE 20,000 (EXCLUDING THE THAI DAM
WHO WILL REMAIN IN THEIR PRESENT LOCATION). THE GOVERNOR PLANS

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NEW, OPEN BARRACKS-TYPE BUILDINGS. HE SAYS HE NOW HAS ENOUGH MONEY AND HELP FOR BASICS BUT NO EXTRAS. HE SEEMS TO MEAN BUSINESS, BUT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE EVER INCREASING NUMBERS OF NEW ARRIVALS FILTERING ACROSS THE MEKONG. HE IS ALSO APPRE-HENSIVE FOR POLITICAL REASONS ABOUT PROVIDING MORE FOR THE REFUGEES THAN HE IS ABLE TO GIVE HIS OWN PEOPLE.

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AID-05 INSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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SAM-01 OMB-01 EUR-12 /092 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3981
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
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H. KHON KAEN'S NEW GOVERNOR OF TWO WEEKS, WHO WAS VISITING THE NAM PHONG CAMP WHILE US GROUP WAS THERE, IS A DYNAMIC PERSON WHO SHOWED REAL INTEREST IN REFUGEE PROBLEMS AND IS LIKELY TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. AT ARANYAPRATHET, HOWEVER, A NEW CAMP SITE IS ONLY NOW BEING FENCED IN, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE VAGUE AS TO SPECIFIC PLANS OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY FOR THE ACTUAL START OF CONSTRUCTION.

I. THE NEW UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, DR. BERTA, AN EXPERIENCED HAND IN REFUGEE MATTERS, SHOWS GREAT SENSITIVITY TO THE PRO-DDINGS HE HAS RECEIVED RECENTLY FROM UNHCR OFFICES IN GENEVA AND NEW YORK AT U.S. INSTIGATION. HE IS NOW WORKING CLOSELY WITH THAI AUTHORITIES, HAS EXPANDED HIS STAFF MATERIALLY, AND IS ADDING STILL MORE FIELD REPRESENTATIVES. HE IS ALSO PUSHING PLANS FOR A CONSOLIDATION OF CAMPS FROM THE PRESENT TOTAL OF OVER 21 CAMPS TO EIGHT, AT WHICH POINT HE SAYS HE WILL HAVE

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ENOUGH REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER ALL CAMPS ADEQUATELY. HE SAYS HE HAS NO IMMEDIATE MONEY PROBLEMS AND, UNLIKE HIS BOSS IN GENEVA, IS RECEPTIVE TO INCREASED PARTICIPATION BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. WHILE OBVIOUSLY STILL SMARTING FROM EARLIER U.S. CRITICISM, HE SEEMS FINALLY TO BE BUILDING UP A COMMENDABLE HEAD OF STEAM.
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J. RECOMMENDATION: WE PLAINLY NEED TO MAINTAIN OUR PRESENT HEAVY PRESSURE ON THE UNHCR AND THROUGH HIM AND, WHERE FEASIBLE, THROUGH DIRECT INTERVENTION TO IMPRESS ON THE THAI AUTHORITIES OUR CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT THE WELFARE OF THE REFUGEES REMAINING IN THAILAND. THE U.S. MISSION POINTS OUT THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES OF THE THAI POSITION,BUT IS SEEKING MEANS TO SUGGEST IMPROVEMENT AND NEW INITIATIVES WHICH WILL BE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE AND PRACTICALLY EFFECTIVE. TO STRENGTHEN ITS HAND, THE EMBASSY NEED TO BE AUTHORIZED TO MAKE AN IMMEDIATE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT COVERING NOT ONLY THE $5.6 MILLION FOR THE LAO, BUT ALSO THE $3 MILLION PLUS PLANNED FOR THE KHMER. THE FACT THAT ADEUATE FUNDS ARE AVAIL-ABLE AND THAT THIS IS KNOWN PUBLICLY CAN BE USED BY UNHCR AND US TO PRESSURE THE THAI TO MAKE GREATER EFFORTS.

4. SPEEDING UP THE LAO PROGRAM.

A. MOST OF THE UNSPONSORED LAO WHO HAVE BEEN SCREENED FOR MOVEMENT TO THE U.S. WITHIN THE 3,400 SPACES APPROVED UNDER THE GROUP PAROLE PROGRAM HAVE BEEN LIVING UNDER MOST TRAUMATIC CONDITIONS SINCE EARLY SUMMER.

B. RECOMMENDATION: NOW THAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO INCLUDE THE LAO IN THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE LEGISLATION (STATE 262410) AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE WINDING DOWN THEIR VIETNAMESE AND KHMER ACTIVITIES, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PERSUADE THE VOLAGS TO SWING INTO FULL SCALE ACTION AND SECURE SPONSORS FOR THE REMAINING LAO. WASHINGTON CLEARANCE IS STILL REQUIRED, HOWEVER, IN A NUMBER OF CASES AND INS REPRESENTATION IS NOW NEEDED AGAIN HERE IN THAILAND. INS SHOULD BE ASKED TO PROVIDE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND THE INS REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO STAY AS LONG AS NEEDED.

5. LONG TERM CONSIDERATIONS:

A. IT IS CLEAR THAT THAILAND, BECAUSE OF ITS PROPINQUITY, WILL BE INVOLVED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE REFUGEES FROM INDO-CHINA FOR SOME TIME. MANY CONTINUE TO ARRIVE EACH DAY, CON-STITUTING A MAJOR HEADACHE FOR THE RTG, WHICH WILL CONTINUE
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TO NEED EVERYONE'S HELP. IF THE U.S., WITH A POPULATION OF OVER 200 MILLION, WERE TO BE FACED WITH THE SAME PROBLEM ON A PROPORTIONAL BASIS, WE WOULD HAVE TO CARE FOR OVER HALF MILLION REFUGEES. THE PROBLEM IN THAILAND SHOULD PLAINLY BE INTERNATIONALIZED TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE EXTENT--BOTH IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND IN TERMS OF OFFERS OF RESETTLEMENT.

B. WE NEED TO INTESIFY OUR EFFORTS WITH THE UNHCR AND BILATERALLY TO INVOLVE OTHER NATIONS AND INDUCE THEM TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE UNHCR/RTG PROGRAM AND TAKEN AN INCREASED NUMBER OF QUALIFIED REFUGEES FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS: THIS SHOULD BE A MAJOR THEME FOR THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE UNHCR'S NOVEMBER 17 REPORT TO THE GENERALY ASSEMBLY. IT NEEDS ALSO TO BE FOLLOWED WITH INTENSIVE CORRIDOR WORK WITH FRIENDLY DELEGATIONS IN THE UN AND IN FURTHER BILATERAL APPROACHES IN GOVERNMENTS BY EMBASSIES ABROAD.

U.S. AGENCIES MUST ALSO GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO WHAT OUR OWN POLICY POSITION WILL BE TOWARDS ACCEPTING ADDITIONAL INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WITHIN OUR BORDERS FOR RESETTLEMENT BEYOND A CASE BY CASE APPROACH. THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE A NEW PROGRAM GEARED NOT TO THE EMERGENCY EVACUATION SITUATION WHICH PROMPTED THE ORIGINAL INDOCHINESE PAROLE PROGRAMS AND THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE LEGISLATION BUT TO A MORE PROTRACTED BUT NEVERTHELESS CRITICAL SITUATION IN WHICH THE U.S. MUST FACE UP TO ITS OBLIGATIONS AND FULFILL ITS TRADITIONAL HUMANITARIAN ROLE TOWARDS DESERVING REFUGEES FROM ABROAD. A NEW SUSTAINED PROGRAM GEARED TO THE CONTINUING PROBLEMS OF THE INDOCHINESE WHO STILL HAVE THE FORCE OF SPIRIT AND THE DRIVING INITIATIVE TO SEEK A NEW LIFE OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRIES AND FREE OF THE NEW ORDER NEEDS TO BE CAREFULLY PLANNED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND OFFERED FOR APPROVAL BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS.
WHITEHOUSE



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